The Los Angeles Police Department's West Point Leadership Program: Participant Survey

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The Los Angeles Police Department's West Point Leadership Program (WPLP) was established in 1996. It is one of very few programs in the country that is directed at improving leadership among current command staff within police organizations. The purpose of this project is to assess perceptions of past participants as to the overall effectiveness/usefulness of the WPLP training. Generally, the WPLP was found to be very effective at meeting its stated goals and better equipping command staff to deal with leadership issues.

Leadership is an inherent necessity in any organization, perhaps even more so in those formulated in a paramilitary style, such as that found in police organizations. It is a value that police organizations have historically sought, yet have only indirectly mentioned in training. One common rational for this incongruity is that leadership is often viewed as a trait that is inborn. New and innovative programs directed at training officers to be better leaders, however, have recently challenged this assumption. Both the New York Police Department (NYPD) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) have constructed and implemented police training programs directed at improving leadership among command staff personnel.

While the NYPD has a similar training program for leaders, to date no formal results have been released from exit surveys. In Los Angeles, the program is based on an andragogical method, or adult-centered learning, originally developed at West Point. The model used at West Point to improve the leadership of higher-ranking officers was adapted in the mid 1990s for use with command staff in law enforcement and became the Los Angeles Police Department's West Point Leadership Program.

Although very few studies on police training have focused on leadership, many either directly or indirectly included it in their analyses (Lumb, 1995; Dantzker, 1996). Dantzker (1996) sampled police chiefs across the country and found that leadership was cited as the most important skill to possess in order to be an effective chief. Carter (1994) noted that the most common complaint from police officers was a lack of leadership. Leadership is commonly mentioned throughout the literature on police training, largely in response to reports from the rank and file that their commanders are not clear and concise regarding department initiatives. The ongoing debate regarding higher education as a requirement for police recruits inevitably mentions the ability to help lead the

movement of organizational change (Baro and Burlingame, 1999). Despite the seemingly common acceptance of leadership as a necessary characteristic for police officers, only recently has the issue been addressed.

The purpose of this article is to evaluate reasons officers in police organizations choose to participate in the WPLP, as well as the program's effectiveness from participants' points of view. The article provides a perfunctory look at how effectively the program is providing motivation to officers who have recently completed the program, as well as assessing the possible impact of various demographic characteristics.

Program Summary

The current curriculum at the LAPD's West Point Leadership Program (WPLP) was modeled after the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, which they developed shortly after the Vietnam War. The military realized that their leaders had fallen short of expectations. To address this issue, they developed the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership by combining techniques from educational institutions around the world.

In the 1990s, the LAPD had fallen short of community expectations and turned to the current experts in leadership at the USMA at West Point. In 1992, former LAPD Assistant Chief Jessie Brewer identified the need to improve leadership training and contacted the USMA at West Point for its support (LAPD, 2002). In 1994, the LAPD sent Deputy Chief Rick Dinse, Commanders John Moran and George Gascon, Lieutenant Kathleen Sheehan, and Sergeant Stanley Lemelle to participate in a Faculty Development Workshop on leadership at the USMA at West Point (LAPD, 2002). They adapted the 40-hour program at West Point and expanded it to 136 hours, adding a variety of materials that were more applicable to the law enforcement community. The first class was taught in 1996 and has since been offered an average of three times each year. The program has graduated 304 students representing law enforcement agencies across the west coast and is accredited through the California State University Los Angeles for undergraduate and graduate credits.

The conceptual foundation for leadership adopted by the program is "the process of influencing human behavior so as to accomplish goals" (LAPD, 2003: pg 4) Influencing human behavior is calculated through a leader's ability to meet the needs of individuals within his/her command and goals are defined as those of the organization. The WPLP focuses on improving individual ability to maintain a balance between the needs of subordinates and the demands of superiors at all levels of the command. They define the program as using a decision-making model based on the scientific method. The WPLP refers to this process as Intellectual Procedure. Intellectual Procedure helps focus

command staff on situations when personal attributes and goals such as motivation, performance, and satisfaction are in direct conflict with the goals of the organization. Intellectual Procedure can also be used to proactively reduce the likelihood that these conflicts will occur.

It is important to place the WPLP in context with other leadership programs currently being offered in the United States. Two such programs are Harvard's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI), and the National Highway Safety Transportation Administration and the National Sherriff's Association (NHSTA/NSA) officer leadership program. While both of these programs have been praised for their effectiveness, their goals are much narrower than the WPLP. The NPLI is designed to prepare officials to "respond to situations beyond the scope of their immediate experience, cope with high levels of uncertainty and stress, reach coherent decisions under pressure, and coordinate, define and guide the actions of a wide range of people and organizations" (Harvard, 2006). The NHTSA/NSA officer leadership program focuses on developing officers' skills through the creation of training materials and traffic safety initiatives (NHTSA, 2002). The WPLP is unique in its approach to teaching leadership techniques that are designed for use on an everyday basis, whether in traffic safety, threat of terrorism, or any number of daily situations.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the WPLP by assessing participants' perceptions of its usefulness. The WPLP aims to motivate officers to achieve their full potential and make every effort to become better leaders. While a longitudinal study following the careers of participants to their fruition would certainly provide more empirical support, the present study seeks only to provide a cursory look at how recent graduates view the WPLP, using their numerous years of experience and prior in-service training as a basis for comparison. This analysis will investigate their perceptions, along with any possible effects of various demographics.

Leadership Defined

Strong leadership is a hallmark of any successful organization. A good leader should exhibit qualities that inspire subordinates and receive praise from superiors. "Leadership, quite simply, is the ability to influence others" (Green, 2006). Many people have tried to clarify exactly what comprises a great leader. Warren Bennis (1982) wrote twenty-five years ago that there were over 350 definitions of leadership, with more being adopted every day. While these definitions are numerous, there are several attributes that seem to be universally acknowledged. Northouse (2004) classified leadership theories into four categories: the "great man" and genetic theories, a traits approach, behavioral explanations, and situational theories. The problem with theses theories,

however, is that few authors have included clear examples from policing (Haberfield, 2006). Some organizations (e.g., the Leadership Development Institute at the FBI Academy) feel that leadership requires an accumulation and application of prior learning (Corderman, 2006). These qualities that the FBI and other law enforcement agencies (as well as the Los Angeles Police Department 's West Point Leadership Program) emphasize include values such as integrity, respect, fairness, focus, and empowerment.

Leadership in law enforcement has historically followed the three basic eras in policing. During the political era (1840-1930), the police were led predominantly by the politicians who granted them power. Close ties to politicians caused an enormity of problems that culminated with the Wickersham Commission reports in 1931. In response to these reports and widespread dissatisfaction with the police, the professional era (1930-1980) developed. It was during this time that a professional distance was emphasized for police officers. Leadership, therefore, was found within organizations, predominantly through the office of the chief. With the emphasis on professionalism, however, came the loss of the police officer as a neighbor and more as an occupying army (Kerlikowske, 2004). This viewpoint and a renewed emphasis on police behavior in the 1960s and '70s led to the community era of policing (1980-present). The community era stressed citizen input and attempted to take leadership cues from community leaders, as well as from within the organization. It was during this time that police organizations began looking for leadership in every officer, thus accentuating the role leadership plays in every communication between command staff and line officers and thereby stressing some of the very core values of police officers.

Integrity has long been a core value sought by police organizations. Haberfield (2006) suggested that using the term integrity was much less threatening than any discussion involving the term ethics. A good leader will show integrity "on and off duty" (Staveley, 2004). This is especially important for police leaders because officers typically rely on the ethics of their superiors to guide their own behavior (Martinez-Carbonell, 2003). A summary of integrity by Devore (2004) is that, "people don't want to follow a person they cannot trust. [And] bosses don't want to promote those they cannot trust." Integrity adds consistency to one's character. The good leader is predictable in how he or she will address ethical and moral issues.

Another type of risk is the leader's capacity to empower his employees. The good leader will want to share some power with his employees. In empowering subordinates, the leader allows them to realize their own potential. The Intellectual Procedure taught at the WPLP encourages command staff to lead by example and thus recognize this need. Scandura, Graen, and Novak (1986) suggested that this balance had to be considered for an effective leader-member exchange to take place. This promotes

the employees to exercise their own decision-making skills. Employees that are empowered are self-confident. They are often encouraged to present new ideas and suggestions and also solutions to solve such problems. By doing this, the leader has created an atmosphere that encourages more leaders and not just followers.

The WPLP is founded on the idea that through training it is possible for officers to become effective leaders. They learn how to set higher standards for themselves and those around them. They learn that respect is a two-way street that promotes respect throughout the whole of the organization. They learn how and when to make decisions based on the "big picture" and what is best for the organization, and they learn to empower their officers to become better leaders themselves.

Methodology

Although the program has received numerous accolades within the law enforcement community and throughout Los Angeles, no formal evaluation of the WPLP has been conducted. This study was undertaken in coordination with the LAPD's continuing education division to address this need. During the early stages of this project, it became apparent that directly measuring leadership was not feasible. First, we had no method by which to compare officers prior to completing the program. Officers in the program could have ranged from exceptional to inadequate prior to entering the program. Second, leadership in and of itself is a vague concept that could be operationalized in a number of ways and would be affected by numerous variables. An officer's likeability, friendliness, or subordinate fear could seriously alter results. Third, the goals of the WPLP were not consistent with building great leaders, rather helping officers achieve their personal potential and striving to become better leaders.

A survey was developed to directly assess whether WPLP graduates believed the course content succeeded in its main goals. Thus, the survey was designed to elicit the efficacy of the program from the participants' points of view. The survey was sent to graduates at least six months removed from the program (N=304). A systematic random sample of 100 graduates was drawn and surveys were distributed using standard mailing practices using an electronic medium. The response rate was 52% (N=52), which was attributed in part to the unwillingness of command staff to complete surveys (as noted by personal comments), an admitted lack of familiarity with the medium, and limited follow-up with potential respondents. While the response rate was not as high as was anticipated, a 52% response rate for management within a law enforcement organization for a voluntary survey is not considered poor. In regard to the issue of nonresponse, we investigated the possibility of systematic bias due to nonresponse. Since we do not have any information about survey nonrespondents other than the facts that their ranks within their respective

organizations were sergeant or higher during the survey field period and that they worked for a law enforcement agency within the State of California, it was deemed impractical to try and ascertain any systematic way that nonrespondents may have differed from those who completed the survey.

Several areas of interest were measured by the survey. First, respondents were asked to rate using Likert-style responses whether various statements corresponded with their reasons for choosing to participate in the WPLP (mnemonic in parenthesis). The statements include:

1) To learn new skills (SKILLS)
2) To enhance my understanding of leadership (LEADERSHIP)
3) Provide an opportunity to improve the way I do my job (IMPROVE JOB)
4) Gain personal recognition and respect from my fellow officers (RESPECT)
5) Support my agency's mission/goals (GOAL)
6) Increase in compensation (COMPENSATION)
7) To become a more effective leader (LEADER)
8) Advancement within my organization (ADVANCEMENT)

Range of possible responses provided to the participant was "1" ("Not at all") to "7" ("Very Much").

Second, using a Likert scale, respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that their experiences with the WPLP were positive. These statements correspond with the stated goals of the WPLP: to integrate course content into daily practices, challenge students to reach their potential, and inspire students to adopt a lifelong study of leadership. Several statements were used on the survey to assess their experiences, including (mnemonic in parenthesis):

1) The material presented in the WPLP has practical application to my job (APPLICATION)
2) The techniques taught in the WPLP are useful in my position (POSITION)
3) Since completing the WPLP, I am better able to attain the goals of my agency while meeting the needs of my subordinates (SUBORDINATES)
4) The program helped me to enhance my problem-solving skills (PROBLEM)
5) I am able to apply the strategies presented in the WPLP to leadership situations daily (STRATEGIES)
6) I am able to translate the theories presented into effective leadership behaviors that suit my rank and assignments (THEORIES)

7) Since completing the program, I am better able to manage inter-group conflict (CONFLICT)

8) The program better enabled me to develop clear objectives and set goals (OBJECTIVES)

9) Since completing the program, I am better able to help subordinates internalize the values of my organization (INTERNALIZE)

The range of responses provided to respondents was "1" ("Strongly Disagree") to "7" ("Strongly Agree"). It should also be noted that respondents were also provided a "Neutral" response (4).

Finally, several demographic questions were included for comparative purposes. Respondents were asked several open-ended questions, including age in years, affiliated agency, rank, years employed with current agency, and total years of service in law enforcement. Respondents were also asked their sex (Male = 0 and Female = 1) their race/ethnicity, and highest level of education completed. Race was treated as a nominal variable with the following categories: African-American/Black (0), Hispanic (1), Asian/Pacific Islander (2), Native American (3), non-Hispanic White (4), and Other (5). Education was treated as an ordinal variable with the following categories: High school graduate/GED (0), Vocational school beyond high school (1), Some college (2), Associate (3), Bachelor's degree (4), Some graduate education (5), and Graduate degree (6).

Comparative Analysis

Along with describing basic statistics regarding the overall experience the participant had with the WPLP (including why participants chose to attend and the effectiveness of the program), we also attempted to assess the impact of demographic variables on these outcomes. First of all, we assessed whether these outcomes varied by sex and race. We also assessed the effect of age, affiliated agency, and rank on these outcomes. For clarity purposes, the latter variables were collapsed into distinct nominal categories. Age was treated as a nominal variable with respondents aged 30-39, 40-49, and 50-59 being compared. Because age was highly correlated to job tenure, similar results were expected for age and years on the job. Affiliated agency was treated as a nominal variable comparing the Los Angeles Police Department with larger agencies and other smaller agencies[1]. Rank was also treated as a nominal variable with two categories: captain or higher and lieutenant or lower. Morris, Shinn, and Dumont (1999)

found that officers who held a higher rank or had longer job tenure were more likely to hold a stronger commitment to the department and the profession.

Results

Respondents included in this analysis completed the WPLP and exit survey (N=52). Of those who met those qualifications, 78.8 percent were male and 21.2 percent were female. Furthermore, the majority of respondents self-identified as white (73.1 percent), while the remaining identified themselves as Hispanic (15.4 percent), African American (5.8 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (3.8 percent), and other (1.9 percent). The average age of respondents was 43.82 years.

Respondents who completed the program and exit survey were affiliated with various law enforcement agencies and maintained different ranks in their respective organizations. The majority of respondents were directly affiliated with the LAPD (32.7 percent), while 19.2 percent of respondents were from other larger agencies. Remaining respondents (48.1 percent) came from various smaller agencies around Los Angeles. Of respondents, 44.2 percent of were lieutenants, 19.2 percent were captains, and 9.6 percent were detectives. Remaining respondents included a variety of civilian/non-sworn, management personnel, and detectives. Furthermore, the average participant was a part of his or her organization for an extensive time period. Respondents served an average of 20.3 years in law enforcement and were employed at their current agencies an average of 19.9 years.

Respondents generally learned about the WPLP through past program graduates (51.9 percent). However, a smaller proportion of respondents learned about the training program through superiors who did not graduate from the program (11.5 percent) and program instructor/coordinators (11.5 percent), while others learned about the program through subordinates who did not graduate from the program (1.9 percent) and friends (3.8 percent).

Table 1

Mean scores for statements regarding why respondents chose to attend the WPLP

	Overall	Sex		Race				Age			Agency			Rank	
Pneumonic	Mean Scores	Male	Female	Black	Hisp	Asian	White	30-39	40-49	50-59	LAPD	Large	Small	Capt +	Lt -
Skills	6.39	1.49	2.09	7.00	6.63	6.00	6.32	6.30	6.50	6.00	6.53	6.00	6.44	6.31	6.64
Leadership	6.48	1.49	1.64	6.33	6.88	6.50	6.42	6.60	6.56	6.00	6.665	6.10	6.52	6.40	6.57
Improve Job	6.42	1.54	1.73	6.00	6.50	6.00	6.47	6.00	6.66	6.00	6.53	6.00	6.52	6.37	6.64
Respect	3.04	5.23	4.00*	2.67	2.38	5.00	3.08	3.20	3.07	3.00	2.94	2.67	3.24	2.91	3.36
Goals	4.96	3.05	3.00	2.67	5.00	5.50	5.14	4.00	5.23*	4.88	4.50	5.11	5.20	4.74	5.92*
Compensation	1.74	6.54	5.27*	1.33	1.63	3.00	1.72	2.10	1.77	1.25	2.00	2.00	1.48	1.82	1.57
Leader	6.42	1.49	1.91	7.00	6.63	6.50	6.37	6.60	6.47	6.00	6.88	5.50	6.48*	6.46	6.21
Advancement	4.24	3.77	3.73	4.33	3.50	6.00	4.36	4.10	4.55	3.63	3.63	4.67	4.48	4.24	4.14

N=52

* = p< .05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001 (independent samples t-test)
Note: Means being compared and found to be significantly different are highlighted for each category.

Table 1 provides descriptive mean statistics regarding why respondents chose to participate in the program. Table 1 also provides a statistical comparative analysis of mean scores by basic demographic groups, including sex, race, age, agency, and rank. As noted above, several statements ranging from 1 to 7 described reasons respondents chose to participate in the WPLP. A score of "1" indicated that the respondents considered the statement as having little ("Not at all") impact on their decision to enroll in and complete the program, while a score of "7" indicated that the statement had a lot to do with their decisions to enroll in and complete the program ("Very much"). Therefore, greater mean scores reflect more prominent reasons for participating in the WPLP.

In general, reasons for taking the WPLP that received the greatest support include learning new skills (SKILLS), enhancing their understanding of leadership (LEADERSHIP), improving the way they do their job (IMPROVE JOB), and becoming a more effective leader (LEADER). In particular, the LEADERSHIP and IMPROVE JOB reasons maintain mean scores of 6.48 and 6.42, respectively. Statements dealing with leadership (SKILLS and LEADER) maintain similar mean scores of 6.39 and 6.42, respectively. Statements that did not receive as great support include statements dealing with gaining more respect (RESPECT) with a mean average of 3.04, increasing chances of advancement (ADVANCEMENT) with a mean score of 4.24, supporting the agency's mission/goals with a mean of 4.96 (GOALS). To gain compensation (COMPENSATION) appears to be the least accepted reason for participating in the training program with a mean score of 1.74. Therefore, respondents reported being interested in improving their skills and leadership abilities rather than personal gain for attending the WPLP.

Table 1 also assesses the impact of demographic variables on why respondents chose to participate in the WPLP. As compared to the overall mean findings, sex and race responded in a similar fashion. Regardless of sex or race, respondents reported the need for skills and to enhance their leadership abilities as reasons for attending, while denying the need for promotion or compensation as reasons for attending the WPLP.

However, there appears to be difference by sex. Using an independent-samples t-test, findings reveal a statistical mean difference between male and female respondents on two questions: RESPECT and COMPENSATION. Female respondents were more likely to state that gaining personal recognition and respect from my fellow officers (RESPECT) and increasing compensation (COMPENSATION) were reasons for participating in the WPLP. A comparison by race revealed no mean differences that reached statistical significance.

Comparing mean scores across age groups provides quite similar results to the overall mean pattern: each age group maintained lower mean averages on statements

that reflect gaining skills and leadership enhancement as the key reasons for participating in the program. Interestingly, although the mean scores for all statements actually increase from the 30's to the 50's age group (exception GOALS), the difference never reaches statistical significance (see the comparison of 30's age group and 40's age group on GOALS). Although not significant, this could reflect a need of gaining compensation and respect for their actions once officers get to a certain point in their careers.

Assessing the impact of being a member of the LAPD versus other agencies reflected similar mean scores as those for the group as a whole with very little variation. Therefore, no impact of agency was found (see mean difference between large and small agencies on the LEADER statement). All three types were more likely to indicate the reason for attendance revolved around gaining skills and leadership abilities rather than advancement or compensation. Comparing ranks provides some interesting observations. Respondents ranked lieutenant or below maintained greater mean scores for five of the eight statements, although only one mean difference reached statistical significance. Using an independent samples t-test, respondents ranked lieutenant or above were statistically more likely to state that the reason they are participating in the program is to support the goal/mission of their agencies (GOALS).

Table 2

Mean scores for Experience Statements.

	Overall														
	Mean Scores	Sex		Race				Age			Agency			Rank	
Pneumonic		Male	Female	Black	Hisp	Asian	White	30-39	40-49	50-59	LAPD	Large	Small	Capt +	Lt -
Application	5.81	5.78	5.91	3.67	4.88	4.50	6.28*	5.10	6.06	5.67	5.47	6.60*	5.72	5.80	6.00
Position	5.70	5.73	5.59	4.33	4.88	4.00	6.14	5.05	5.97	5.44	5.50	6.10	5.68	5.54	6.04
Subordinates	5.04	5.02	5.10	3.67	4.25	4.50	5.34	4.44	5.28	4.89	4.59	5.60	5.12	5.06	5.07
Problem	5.36	5.34	5.41	5.33	4.63	4.00	5.59	5.04	5.47	5.33	5.32	6.00	5.12*	5.29	5.32
Strategies	5.17	5.12	5.32	5.00	4.88	3.00	5.36*	4.85	5.35	4.67	5.09	5.10	5.24	5.12	5.18
Theories	5.35	5.27	5.64	5.33	4.75	4.00	5.55	5.30	5.41	5.11	5.35	5.50	5.28	5.17	5.43
Conflict	5.25	5.10	5.82	4.00	4.38	4.50	5.58	5.00	5.38	5.22	5.24	5.80	5.04	5.26	5.14
Objectives	4.81	4.68	5.27	4.00	4.13	4.00	5.03	4.20	4.94	5.00	4.59	5.30	4.76	4.83	4.79
Internalize	5.01	5.00	5.05	3.67	4.63	4.50	5.20	4.65	5.00	5.44	4.79	5.10	5.12	4.94	5.18

N=52

* = p< .05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001 (independent samples t-test)
Note: Means being compared and found to be significantly different are highlighted for each category

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics assessing the respondents' personal experiences in the WPLP program using Likert-scaled items. Table 2 also provides a statistical comparative analysis of mean scores by basic demographic groups, including agency, rank, sex, age, and race. Options provided to the respondents ranged from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 7 ("Strongly Agree"), with 7 reflecting more positive attitudes toward the program. Overall, respondents report high levels of agreement for each of the questions. For all statements, respondents in general maintain a mean score greater than 5.00 (exception OBJECTIVES). This reflects general agreement that the WPLP training is applicable and translates into their abilities and skills at work. However, it should be noted that, with a mean of 4.81, respondents did not necessarily feel as confident that the program better enabled them to develop clear objectives and set goals (OBJECTIVES). Meeting this need could be emphasized in future agendas.

Assessing whether the WPLP training had practical application to their jobs (APPLICATION) and was useful in their positions (POSITION), 82.7 percent and 73.1 percent of respondents agreed, respectively. Respondents also agreed that the WPLP training helps them meet the needs of subordinates (SUBORDINATES; 82.7 percent), enhances their problem-solving skills (PROBLEM; 82.7 percent), apply the strategies presented in WPLP to their leadership situations daily (STRATEGIES; 74 percent), translate theories presented into effective leadership behaviors (THEORIES; 76.9 percent), and manage inter-group conflict (CONFLICT; 75.0 percent). As noted above, the statement regarding the ability to develop clear objectives and set goals received a lower proportion (65.4 percent agreed) of responses than the above statements (OBJECTIVES). A lower proportion of respondents (63.1 percent) also agreed that the WPLP better enabled them to help subordinates internalize the values of the organization (INTERNALIZE). However, it should be noted that although less popular, these statements were agreed upon by a majority of the respondents.

Table 2 also provides the impact of demographic variables on the experience of the respondents. The sex of the respondent appears not to impact the responses. Both males and females maintain high mean scores and, therefore, are likely to agree with the statements that the WPLP positively impacted their work experiences. Race also did not have much of an impact, with responses not varying across racial groups. Respondents, regardless of race, were more likely to agree with the statements than not. A few exceptions did exist. Using an independent samples t-test, white respondents were more likely to state that the material presented in the WPLP has practical application to their jobs than African American respondents. Furthermore, white respondents were statistically more likely to state that they are able to apply the strategies presented in the WPLP to leadership situations daily than Asian respondents. Assessing the impact of the age groups provides similar results. Respondents, regardless of age, generally agreed that the WPLP training had a positive impact on their experiences at work.

Similarly, the impact of agency was consistent: the LAPD and other organizations maintained similar mean scores. It should be noted that respondents from the larger organizations maintain higher mean scores for all statements (exceptions STRATEGIES and INTERNALIZE) than respondents from the LAPD and the smaller organizations, although most remained statistically insignificant. Exceptions in the results did exist. Using an independent samples t-test, respondents from the LAPD were less likely than respondents from larger organizations to agree with the following statement: The material presented in the WPLP has practical application to my job. Furthermore, in comparing means of individuals from larger and

smaller agencies, respondents from larger agencies were more likely to state that the program helped them enhance their problem-solving skills than respondents from smaller agencies.

Regardless, respondents from all agencies were more likely to agree with the statements that the WPLP positively impacted their work experiences. Finally, rank also appeared not to have an impact on responses. Regardless of rank, respondents were more likely to agree with the statements than they were to disagree.

Conclusion

This analysis is a cursory evaluation developed to establish a baseline for future analysis. It was neither designed nor intended to directly measure leadership, rather to assess graduates' opinions regarding the training program. It was assumed that due to the experience of the officers completing the training, a baseline could be drawn regarding its effectiveness. Using the three main goals of the program as a measure of effectiveness, we found that the WPLP had effectively met all three of its goals. It was remarkable to find that all respondents agreed that the training met their expectations and that it inspired them to continue a study of leadership. It is recommended that future research focus on more concrete measures of leadership, moving toward a standard conceptual and operational definition.

In particular, this research found that reasons for participating in the program revolved around gaining skills and enhancing leadership abilities that would benefit them in their positions. Respondents were unlikely to state that compensation or advancement were viable reasons for WPLP participation. This response pattern persists regardless of demographic characteristics such as age, race, sex, agency of employment, or rank. Such responses should be considered limited considering the impact of social desirability. Respondents may feel reluctant to state that compensation or advancement was the impetus for participating. They may feel such responses would not reflect well to their superior officers, although no results were released prior to this analysis. Nonetheless, these questions at least reflect social norms. Respondents appear to understand that this program is meant to improve skills and leadership abilities. Therefore, upon entering the program, they know the skills the WPLP are teaching and attempting to implement in the organization.

This research also reflects positive feedback regarding the impact of the WPLP on improving skills and leadership abilities. This is especially noted, as respondents tend to be high-ranking officials in their respective organizations and generally feel they are better able to meet the needs of and relate to subordinates. Although there is always a chance of the social desirability effect, such positive findings do reflect glowingly on the effectiveness of this program. Respondents generally feel that the WPLP training has helped them improve their skills and helped them become better leaders.

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